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Terry Goddard Warns Of Scam Soliciting Donations for Veterans

(Phoenix, Ariz. – May 18, 2007) Attorney General Terry Goddard today warned consumers to be wary of callers claiming to be from Arizona Veterans Hospital or Veterans Services asking for donations over the telephone.

The Attorney General's Office has received information that individuals claiming to be associated with the hospital or veterans group are soliciting donations over the telephone to make food baskets for veterans.

This is a scam! The Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center Hospital and the Arizona State Veterans Home do not solicit over the telephone and are not collecting money for food baskets. Goddard offered the following tips to consumers when donating to charitable organizations:

- Ask questions about the organization soliciting funds. A legitimate charity will be happy to provide information about its work.
- Be careful of charities with names that sound impressive or resemble those of other organizations. Some scam artists use names similar to reputable, well-known organizations to confuse donors.
- Do not make cash contributions. Always contribute by check. Make your check payable to the charity, never to the individual soliciting the donation.
- Remember to ask for a receipt and a statement that the contribution is tax deductible.
- Be very skeptical of anyone asking for an immediate donation by requesting your credit card number or bank account information over the telephone.
- Find out how the charity will use your donation. Ask for information about its programs and for a copy of its financial report. Ask what percentage of the funds will be used for the program and how much will be spent on administrative costs. Reputable charities will provide this information.
- Be wary of calls soliciting funds that coincide with highly publicized tragedies, such as devastating fires, floods or other dramatic events. Fraudulent fund raisers will try to exploit sympathy for those who suffered.
- If you have any doubts about a charity, check with the Secretary of State to ensure it is registered as a non-profit.

If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, please contact the Attorney General's Office in Phoenix at 602.542.5763; in Tucson at 520.628.6504; or outside the Phoenix and Tucson metro areas at 1.800.352.8431. To file a complaint in person, the Attorney General's Office has 31 satellite offices throughout the state with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site at www.azag.gov. Consumers can also file complaints on line by visiting the site.

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